DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 980 FL 015 842

AUTHOR Buckheister, Patrick
TITLE Eastern Michigan University's Language and International Trade Program: Overview and Components.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 6p.; In: Proceedings of the Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions (4th, Dearborn, MI, May 2-4, 1985); see FL 015 835.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Second Language Programs; Consortia; *Financial Support; Higher Education; International Educational Exchange; *International Trade; Job Placement; Language Proficiency; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; State Universities
IDENTIFIERS Eastern Michigan University

ABSTRACT

The Language and International Trade Program instituted in 1978 at Eastern Michigan University enrolls three-fourths of the university's undergraduate and graduate foreign language and bilingual studies majors and has become the largest business language studies program in the United States. Important program components include an international cooperative education program providing reciprocal placement of foreign and American business students, and an eleven-institution consortial arrangement to help stabilize exchange enrollments. Funding has been provided by the Department of Education (Title VI), the West German government, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and major foundation and state grants. Language proficiency that allows the student to function in new discourse domains relating to business and trade is a major program goal, which is accomplished through instruction, field experience, and an internationally recognized proficiency testing program. The career placement segment of the program has also been highly successful. Ninety-five percent of graduates have obtained professional positions and 65 percent have obtained positions in international business typically set aside for more senior employees. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED271980

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY'S LANGUAGE AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROGRAM: OVERVIEW AND COMPONENTS

By

Dr. Patrick Buckheister

Professor of ESL

Eastern Michigan University

Ypsilanti, Michigan

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. M. Voght

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL 015842

Eastern Michigan University's

Language and International Trade Program:

Overview and components

The Language and International Trade Program was instituted in 1978 and was fully implemented in 1980. There are now approximately 450 B.A. and M.A. majors in the program, constituting three-fourths of all student majors in the Department of Foreign Languages and Bilingual Studies.

In developing Language and International Trade, the Foreign Language Department has created the largest program in business language studies in the United States, with four advanced undergraduate and two graduate business language courses offered in all three foreign languages taught at EMU. In addition, two graduate-level courses in Business English are also offered to foreign students. Students have come to EMU to major in Language and International Trade from 35 countries (including the U.S.).

According to a survey of our students conducted in the Winter Semester, 1983, the single most attractive component of Language and International Trade is our International Cooperative Education Exchange Program, through which students are placed in foreign professional training assignments. In placing our students abroad, we arrange reciprocal placements of foreign business students from our partner institutions (in Germany, France and Spain) in the U.S. We have also established a consortial linking arrangement with ten other U.S. colleges and universities to stabilize student enrollment in the exchange.

One rather critical dimension of EMU's Language and International Trade program overview would be the financial one and so I will now turn to the funding of the program.

EMU's Language and International Trade Programs were created and implemented through grants from Title VI (The U.S. Department of Education), the government of West Germany, and the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education

(the U.S. Department of Education), which have provided funds for a full-time program director and other forms of program support. From September of 1983 to August of 1984, EMU obtained a grant from the Exxon Education Foundation to fund a second full-time administrative position in Language and International Trade, that of Assistant Director. For the current year 1984-5, the EMU Language and International Trade Program is receiving $75,000 from the State of Michigan for the salaries and benefits of the director and the assistant director. In addition, the program is receiving a grant from the Exxon Education Foundation for a full-time secretary and program expenses, a grant from the Ford Motor Company, and a grant from the Michigan Council for the Humanities for this conference. For the 1985-6 year, we are hoping to have complete institutionalization for the L&IT basic program administration from the State of Michigan as part of the EMU budget. One further thing--we are expecting to add a complete program from beginning to M.A. for Business Japanese as of September 1985.

At this point, I'd like to shift to a description of the requirements for graduation from EMU's L&It program, which you will be able to follow by looking at the blue handout for the MA and the white check-sheet for the B.A. The M.A. in L&IT is an interdisciplinary degree comprised in part of 15 to 18 hours of business and economics and of 10 to 12 hours of intensive foreign language courses at the graduate level. The B.A. in L&IT is also an inter-disciplinary degree of 60 hours, 30 of which are in Business and Economics and 27 of which are in Language and Area studies. In addition, both the M.A. and the B.A. require a field experience of four months of full-time work in a cooperative education position or in an internship in a business firm.

The nature of the International Cooperative Education Exchange program, which we consider to be the crucial factor in Eastern Michigan University's Language and International Trade program is explained in length in the longest

of the handouts you have received. I would like to go through this handout with you here and now, but due to time contraints must request that you review it later. Nevertheless, I felt that as this is what you might call the "king-pin" to our L&IT program, that I should explain why we view it as such, why we think the field experience is so important and again, since I cannot delve into this document, I decided perhaps a short story about a language learner would make my point.

> There was a man who went to Country X. Prior to his visit he had, of course, trained rigorously in Language X, but when he got into the new country and began trying to do daily business, he got a bit of a shock. People fell over laughing whenever he spoke Language X. Well, naturally, the man was dismayed. He decided to attend an institution of higher education in Country X and get a rigorous course in Language X on their home ground. This he did, and with a great passion, for a good period of time. He sweated and slaved over lexis, syntax, and sound. Finally he decided to give his newly acquired confidence and skill a trial run. He went out into a big city and entered a place of business and sat down. When an employee approached him, the man very clearly said in Language X, "Let me have the ham and egg omelette with a side order of potatoes and a cup of coffee with cream but no sugar." The man listening immediately said: "You must be foreign." The man, utterly depressed, said: "Yes, but how did you know?" The employee of the business replied, "This is a hardware store."

So what we are trying to do with the field experience is not only to make sure that people can function in the language, but that they can function in new language environment, new discourse domains, specifically those relating to business and trade.

Hand in hand with the field experience which we so strongly stress at EMU's L&IT program is the language proficiency testing component of our program. Our campus has come to serve as an officially designated testing center recognized in business Spanish by the Madrid Chamber of Commerce, in Business French by the Paris Chamber of Commerce, and in Business German by the Goethe Institute and the Carl Duisberg Society.

I should note here that Session 33 tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. will feature as one participant, Sabina Steglitz, who will be here from the Goethe Institue

to speak about this type of testing.

The final component of EMU's L&IT Program I should mention briefly, although it would be the proof without which there is no pudding, is career placement of our graduates. If you take a longer look at this last document, "Career Placement of Graduates of Business Language Programs: The Results at Eastern Michigan University" by Ray Schaub, you will get more details but suffice it to say here that over 95% of our graduates have obtained professional positions and 65% of those have gotten entry level positions in international business, positions typically set aside for employees of higher seniority, which have been made accessible to our graduates through their training in the Language and International Trade Program.

I realize this has been a bit rushed, but I do thank you for your kind attention.